

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-11 L-03 ACDA-19

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4217

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 4194

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, BE, NL, FR

SUBJECT: F-104 AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT

1. DUTCH NEWSPAPER, "DE TELEGRAAF," CARRIES TWO ARTICLES AUGUST 27 ON F-104 REPLACEMENTS. FIRST, DATELINED BRUSSELS BY ANDRE HERTER, STATES THAT BEGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED ON MIRAGE AS REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104S. HERTER SAYS THAT, "USUALLY WELL-INFORMED AIR FORCE CIRCLES IN BRUSSELS" HAVE SAID THAT "IN SPITE OF DENIALS, AND AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE GREATER PART OF ITS OWN AIR FORCE LEADERSHIP, THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY CHOSEN THE MIRAGE F-1E JET FIGHTERBOMBER AS THE SUCCESSOR TO THE STARFIGHTER."

2. ARTICLE REPORTS THAT MARCEL DASSAULT, IN AN INTERVIEW OVER RADIO LUXEMBOURG LAST SUNDAY EVENING, SAID THAT FRANCE WILL RECEIVE ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF A TOTAL ORDER OF 350 AIRCRAFT FROM CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES, AND THAT HE BELIEVES NETHERLANDS HAS ALREADY CHOSEN NORTHROP YF-17
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COBRA. DASSAULT QUOTED AS SAYING. "NORWAY AND DENMARK

HAVE NOT YET MADE A DECISION, AND BELGIUM IS GREATLY INTERESTED IN THE MIRAGE. I BELIEVE THAT FRANCE IS A FAIR CERTAINTY TO RECEIVE A THIRD OF THE ORDERS."

3. ACCORDING HERTER, IT IS NO GREAT SURPRISE THAT BELGIUM HAS CHOSEN MIRAGE, SINCE DASSAULT COMPANY HAS AN UNCOMMONLY STRONG POSITION IN BELGIUM. DASSAULT HAS FIFTY PERCENT OF BELGIAN AIRCRAFT COMPANY SABCA AND MARCEL DASSAULT IS A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF VAN DEN BOEYNANTS. BELGIAN INDUSTRY WILL NOT ONLY PARTICIPATE IN BUILDING OF BELGIAN MIRAGES, BUT CAN EXPECT BECOME INVOLVED IN FRENCH NUCLEAR POWER PROJECTS IN IRAN.

4. SECOND ARTICLE IS BY JOOST C. DE RUITER FROM PARIS. HE REPORTS THAT POSSIBLE CHOICE BY ALL FOUR CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES OF MIRAGE WOULD BE DECISIVE STEP IN DIRECTION OF JOINT EUROPEAN DEFENSE. WHILE FRENCH BELIEVE THAT FRANCE WILL NEVER OFFICIALLY REJOIN NATO MILITARY STRUCTURE, JOINT EUROPEAN DEFENSE COULD BE EXPRESSED VIA NATO ORGANS. FRENCH PRESIDENT HAS EXPRESSED HIS GOOD INTENTIONS BY INDICATING THAT IN FUTURE HE WANTS FRENCH ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATE IN ALL NATO MANUEVERS AND IN ALL MEETINGS OF MILITARY INFORMATION COMMITTEE.

5. DE RUITER SAYS THAT CONSORTIUM MEMBERS AGREE THAT FRENCH HAVE MADE ENTICING OFFERS, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO FIXED PRICE FOR AIRCRAFT DELIVERIES. HE SAYS THAT IN VIEW RISING WORLD PRICES, THIS REPRESENTS GREAT RISK FOR FRENCH.

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